

CHAPTER XIII

PUBLIC UTILITIES

THE RAILROADS

The people of Utah, in 1868, were eagerly looking forward to the coming of the Union Pacific Railroad to the Territory, and gladly lent their assistance to its building. The spirit of co-operation in the great work was manifested in Provo, as elsewhere. At a priesthood meeting held in May, 1868, Bishop A. O. Smoot announced in relation to the building of the railroad, "We will do our part, but must not neglect our fields, for they are the wealth of Israel. It is the duty of men to consult their bishops before leaving. Then all that can be spared may go out on the road; all who do so, ought to organize in companies."

At a meeting in July of the same year, Bishop Smoot stated that teams had been sent out to bring in the poor immigrants; he expected that thereafter they would be brought by the railroad.

THE UTAH SOUTHERN RAILROAD

On the completion of the Union Pacific to Ogden in 1869, the leading business men of the Territory began building branch lines southward. The Utah

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Central Company built from Ogden to Salt Lake City, and the Utah Southern from Salt Lake south. The latter company was organized in Salt Lake January 17, 1871, with William Jennings as president. Work was commenced May 1, and the road was pushed on as rapidly as facilities would permit.

The eagerness with which the people of Provo awaited the coming of the first railroad to the city is shown by two official motions, one made by Alderman Myron Tanner in the Provo City Council in August, 1871, "that the Utah Southern Railroad Company be invited to run their road through, or as near to the city of Provo as will be practicable for the interest of the company, and that as a Council we tender our best wishes and influence for the welfare of and speedy construction of said railroad;" and the other in the County Court, by Mr. Mayhew, "that the Court guarantees without expense to the Utah Southern Railroad Company the right of way through this county for said road except where it passes through the townsites as entered by the corporate authorities." Both motions were carried unanimously. Provo City later granted the company a right of way two rods wide on Sixth South street.

By November 18, 1873, the track had been completed to Center street, Provo; and on that date President Brigham Young came to the city on the first train. On November 25, at 10:45 a. m., the first official train arrived at the Provo depot, and the event was the occasion for a big celebration. From Salt Lake came Presidents Brigham Young,

George A. Smith, and Daniel H. Wells; Apostles Orson Pratt, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, and Albert Carrington; Hon. William H. Hooper, William Jennings, David McKenzie, and a number of other railroad officials and citizens. As the train pulled in, it was greeted by the firing of cannon and music by the Provo brass band. Some four thousand people were assembled from various parts of the county.

A program was carried out, in which an address of welcome by Mayor A. O. Smoot was read by John B. Milner, a speech was made by George A. Smith, and an address by Brigham Young was read by David McKenzie. Other short speeches and sentiments, interspersed with music, followed. In the evening a "grand railroad ball" was given in the newly finished County Court House.

In June, 1881, three railroads, the Utah Central (Ogden to Salt Lake City), the Utah Southern (Salt Lake City to Juab, Juab County), and the Utah Southern Extension (Juab to Frisco, Beaver County) were consolidated into one corporation under the name of the Utah Central Railway, with a capital of \$4,325,000. Later on Union Pacific interests took over the whole line and the old Utah Central lost its identity. Then followed changes to the Oregon Short Line; the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake; and back to the Union Pacific Railroad.

UTAH AND PLEASANT VALLEY RAILROAD

In 1877 Milan Packard of Springville, backed, according to report, by Walker Brothers, Salt Lake business men, conceived the idea of building a road to the Pleasant Valley coal fields. He began operations by letting small grading contracts to Springville men, making payments largely in goods from Packard's general merchandise store. As a result of doing business in this primitive manner, the little railway received the appellation of the "calico road." Second hand rails and rolling stock were obtained from abandoned roads in American Fork canyon and elsewhere. The road was narrow gauge, and the engines and cars were of small size.

It was completed to Springville in 1879, whereupon steps were taken by Provo citizens to have it extended north to their city. A mass meeting was held November 13 under call of the City Council Committee on Railways and Telegraph lines, at which a resolution was adopted setting forth the benefits Provo would derive through the extension of the road to the city, including the establishment of machine shops, and asking the City Council, "if finances will admit, without creating or incurring debt, to purchase the right of way from the south line of the corporation to the proposed terminus of said line in this city; provided, that the cost does not exceed \$1,000."

In compliance with the resolution, the City Council appointed a committee to negotiate with property owners for the right of way. It was purchased

at a cost of \$1,318.60, the railroad company paying the excess, and work on the extension was soon begun and pushed to completion.

The little road, however, was not entirely satisfactory, as may be seen from the following excerpt from "The Enquirer" of January 10, 1880:

"The Utah and Pleasant Valley coal trains have at last got through the blockade, and on Wednesday night last two car loads were shipped here. But two car loads wouldn't fill a gnat's eye, figuratively speaking."

The life of the calico road was short. Early in 1881 it was sold to a New York company, and soon thereafter became a part of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.

THE DENVER AND RIO GRANDE RAILROAD

The first intimation that a trunk line might run through Provo came with the filing of articles of incorporation with the secretary of state of Colorado in January, 1881, of the Denver, Grand River and Utah Railroad Company. The company, it was said, was composed of Boston, Kansas, and Denver men. In April came the report of the projected extension of the Denver and Rio Grand Railroad to Pleasant Valley to make connection with the narrow gauge coal road, and continue on to Salt Lake City. The genuineness of this enterprise soon became manifest. On October 25, 1881, the Provo City Council received a petition from the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railway asking for a license

to construct, maintain and operate a railway on First (now Sixth South) street. Three days later the petition was granted, and the road was built without delay. It remained a narrow gauge road until 1889, when it was made standard gauge.

In March, 1897, the Rio Grande Western, as the road was known at that time, was granted a franchise to build a track on Second West street, the beginning of a branch line, running through Provo canyon to Provo Valley.

The depot of the road was located at the foot of J street (now University Avenue) near the depot of the first railroad. As the city grew and business increased, better depot facilities were desirable. At a session of the Chamber of Commerce held in January, 1891, Chairman R. H. Dodd presented the matter of better depot accommodations for Provo, and at a later meeting in the same month the Chamber decided to ask for a union depot. The roads were not disposed to build a union depot, but the Denver and Rio Grande announced its readiness to erect a new station if certain concessions of ground were made. To make these concessions would have rendered the approach to the other depot less convenient, and they were therefore not granted. For a number of years there was intermittent depot agitation without results. Finally, in 1905, when the necessity for better depot facilities had become so urgent that realization seemed imminent, the question assumed a sectional phase and worked its way into politics, creating tense feelings. In 1908 the City Council, when about to grant the Denver and

Rio Grande a franchise for the erection of a passenger station at the foot of Third West street, to be used by both roads, was enjoined by a District Court order from taking action. The matter was in 1909 submitted to a vote of the people resulting in a small majority favorable to the franchise. Excavation for the new passenger station began in June, 1910, and on January 1, 1911, business began at the new quarters.

PROVO STREET RAILWAY

One of the manifestations of the boom spirit that reached Provo in the latter eighties was the building of a street railway. The matter was discussed at a session of the Chamber of Commerce held early in January, 1889, and a committee, of which Judge Warren N. Dusenberry was chairman, was appointed to appear before the City Council and ask for a franchise. So urgent was deemed the necessity for action that without waiting for the formulation of definite plans, Judge Dusenberry appeared before the Council and made informal application for a franchise for a proposed street railway to pass through the principal streets of the city. On motion of Councilor Henry J. Maiben a franchise was granted under such regulations as might thereafter be agreed upon. A month later a formal petition was presented, and a franchise was granted for a street car line on University avenue and Center street. More than a year was required to build the line and equip it with a motor engine and several cars. There was some question as to the advisa-

bility of permitting the use of a motor, it being argued that horses would be frightened by the "puffing Billy;" but the argument was successfully answered with the assertion that the horses would soon get used to it.

The principal business of the street car line was its summer traffic with the Provo Lake Resort. On holidays it was patronized to its full capacity. The motor occasionally got out of repair, occasioning delay on the road; and sometimes a car ran off the track, jolting passengers over the ties, but there were no serious mishaps.

The Provo City Railway soon came to the end of its career. There was a lack of patronage, and its affairs were not well-managed. The charge was made, also, that funds secured in Wall Street by bonding, had been misappropriated. In 1892 the cars ceased to run, and on January 9, 1893, by action of the City Council, the franchise was forfeited. Stockholders who had not paid their subscriptions in full were sued and compelled to pay balances due for the benefit of the creditors.

SALT LAKE AND UTAH RAILROAD COMPANY

Early in 1910 there were two groups seeking for franchises for electric inter-urban lines running from Salt Lake City to the southern part of Utah County. The first group, consisting of Jesse Knight and associates, were granted a franchise in February to run through Provo City. A few days later it was reported that the Knight company had consolidated

with the second group, consisting of George Craig, Stephen L. Chipman, Abel John Evans, and others. The franchise granted, however, was not entirely satisfactory, and a new franchise was granted to Abel John Evans, S. L. Chipman, W. L. Hayes, Joseph B. Keeler and others October 5, 1910. The company was granted the use of three streets in passing through the city, Center Street, Fifth South street, and Academy avenue. For street car purposes the use of Third West street was also granted. The grantees, in 1912, transferred their interests to the Salt Lake and Utah Railroad company. This company was granted an amendment, permitting the use of First South street for a short distance, and another franchise for street railway purposes. The road was completed to Provo in 1914, and temporary depot quarters were secured on University avenue. Later the station was built at the present site on Center street.

UTAH RAILWAY

The company owning the Utah Railway, referred to locally as the coal road, was incorporated January 24, 1912. The road operates between Provo and Mohrland, Emery County, and has joint trackage arrangements with the Denver and Rio Grande from Thistle to Utah Railway Junction, about a mile east of Castle Gate. The company has some two thousand coal cars owned jointly with the Union Pacific.

In 1917 railroad shops were built at Provo. They are used jointly with the Union Pacific, the two

roads being closely associated. The number of men employed in the shops varies greatly, but is large enough to add materially to the industrial standing of the city. The general strike of shopmen in 1922 affected the Provo shops and gave the city a new experience. Strikebreakers were employed and a stockade was built around the shop for their protection. The strikers, however, were orderly, and no disturbances of a serious character occurred. The strike was not successful.

The Utah Railway is controlled by the United States Smelting, Refining, and Mining Company. It is heavily bonded.

NEW ROADS

Since the early nineties rumors of the coming of new railroads to the city have been frequent. Denver and the Uintah basin being usually the starting points of these projected roads. The coming of the Moffat road or some line connected with it, is at present an encouraging possibility.

TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE LINES

Provo's first aerial communication with the outside world was over the Deseret Telegraph line, built during the sixties. According to the City Council record of December 29, 1866, Provo City subscribed for six shares of Deseret Telegraph Company stock, and agreed to pay to William Miller "on the apportionment of Provo City as contractor in furnishing and putting up the poles from the

south line of Utah County to Scipio, the amount of \$600 in wheat at \$1.50 per bushel."

Telephone connection was made with Salt Lake September 12, 1887. A city franchise for twenty years was granted to the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone in 1889. It was renewed in 1909.

The Independent Telephone Company was granted a thirty year franchise in 1905, but it soon merged with the Bell Company.

UTAH POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

A number of electric light franchises were granted in 1889, but only one of them materialized in service, that of A. O. Smoot and others, represented by Reed Smoot. The company was identified with the Provo Woolen Mills. Provo City received its first electric service from this company in 1890. The system was transferred to the Electric Company in 1899, which continued to supply the city with light as the retail agent of the Telluride Power Company.

The Telluride Power Company was organized in Colorado in 1900, but had actually started operations ten years previously. After considerable experimentation its organizers decided that "long distance high voltage transmission" was possible. They entered the Utah field in 1899 by constructing Nunn's Station in Provo canyon. The first 40 K. V. line in the world was constructed and operated successfully between this plant and Mercur, a gold mining camp now abandoned. In due time lines were extended to Bingham and Eureka. This ex-

pansion made it possible to furnish wholesale energy to the towns mentioned. Local lighting companies were organized to handle retail service. "The Electric Company" operated in Provo, "Camp Floyd Electric Company" in Mercur, and "The Eureka Electric Company" in Eureka, Silver City and Mammoth. All these companies were consolidated with the Utah Power & Light Company in 1912.

UTAH VALLEY GAS AND COKE CO.

The first gas franchise in Provo was granted in 1890 at the time of the boom, but no plant was built. Several other franchises were granted at later dates with similar lack of results.

In 1911, however, J. A. Jones came to the city and obtained a franchise. John E. Booth and W. H. Ray became associated with him, and a gas company was promoted. Construction work began in 1912, but the company was unable to complete the plant. Salt Lake men became interested and went on with the work, Fred W. Freese, the contractor, eventually becoming the principal stockholder. On January 20, 1914, the gas was turned into the ten miles of mains, and patrons began to burn gas.

Mr. Freese soon disposed of his stock, which is largely held by local men.

In 1917 the gas mains were extended to Springville and Spanish Fork. Franchises have been secured in other towns, and the firm will eventually extend its mains throughout the county. Gas will be obtained from the steel plant.